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SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE UNDER SECRETARY

February 13, 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. BALL

Subject: Testimony Before the Stennis Committee

This afternoon I read over both volumes of Mr. McCone's testimony of the military build up in Cuba before Senator Stennis' Preparedness Subcommittee.

My general impressions, which are for your information only, are as follows:

1. Mr. McCone is a very damaging witness. Throughout his testimony he contradicts or takes issue with Secretary McNamara's press conference performance. As an example, he takes strong issue with Secretary McNamara about the question of subversion in Cuba. Mr. McCone a number of times explicitly states that Cuba is undertaking extensive subversive activities in Latin America and that the continuation of the Russian troops in Cuba only serves to bolster that activity.

2. Mr. McCone testified on two days. His first appearance preceded Secretary McNamara's press conference. It is quite clear from the testimony that as a result of Mr. McCone's first appearance the Senators were quite cynical about Secretary McNamara's performance.

3. This may be wishful thinking, but I did get the impression that Mr. McCone was extremely accommodating to the Republicans, especially Senators Margaret Chase Smith and Goldwater.

4. Mr. McCone, even in the public statement he issued, after his first appearance before this Committee, gives the impression that we knew all along that the missile development was going on in both September and October. This may be the

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result of a curious wording in the release, but the impression is nevertheless conveyed that we were aware of the missile build up as early as September. I believe that Abe Chayes got the same impression upon reading that portion of the transcript.

5. I attach for your information two excerpts from the McCone testimony which I consider to be particularly damaging. The Senator Symington statement, I believe, is a fairly good indication of the kind of impression that he left.

GSS

Attachment:

Excerpts from McCone
Testimony

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EXCERPT FROM VOL. 2, "PREPAREDNESS INVESTIGATION SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES - MILITARY BUILD UP IN CUBA February 7, 1963.

"Mr. McCone: I would be less than frank with you if I did not tell you that I have taken a more alarmed view of the development in Cuba than others in official positions in Washington ever since the build up started the first of August." page 100

. . . .

"Senator Symington: Just one question more: First, Mr. McCone, I want to congratulate you on your testimony, and I think it is important that the records show that before anybody you were suspicious of this and said so in no uncertain terms and did it again and again and again in August. But the powers that be did not agree with your position. You didn't know, but you felt sure, as I understand it, that they would not go to this expense of SAM sites, etc., etc., unless they were doing it to protect offensive weapons, isn't that correct?"

"Mr. McCone: That is right.

"Senator Symington: I think that is important, because it gives us a very good feeling of confidence."

Pages 115-116

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The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited

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The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited: An International Collection of Documents, from the Bay of Pigs to the Brink of Nuclear War

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